

SLEEP PROBLEMS

COMMON CAUSES

IN ADULTS

- Aging
- Alcoholism or abruptly stopping alcohol after long-term use
- Anxiety and depression
- Diseases, such as arthritis, heartburn, and heart or lung problems
- Grief
- Medications
- Sleeping too much during the day
- Stimulants taken in the evening, including nicotine, alcohol, or caffeine.
- Stress and worrying

Home care

Try modifying your nighttime sleeping habits and other behavior before resorting medications. For example:

- Avoid using alcohol in the evening. Avoid caffeine for at least 8 hours before bedtime. Give up smoking, because nicotine is a stimulant.
- Establish a regular bedtime, but don't go to bed if you feel wide awake. Avoid staying in bed for long periods of time while awake, or going to bed because of boredom.
- Take your TV out of your bedroom. Otherwise, your brain becomes used to the stimulation and starts to expect it when you are there. This makes it harder for you to fall asleep.
- Relax by reading, taking a bath, or listening to soothing music before getting to bed.
- A snack before bedtime helps many people.
- Exercise regularly, but not in the last two hours before going to bed.

IN CHILDREN

- For children who have trouble falling asleep, try to make sure that the child is not disturbed by unnecessary noise.
- Avoid sending a child to bed as punishment which can result in poor sleep caused by fear.
- Never give a child sleeping medicine without consulting the doctor first. Generally, it is unwise to treat the problem with medications.

IN INFANTS

Most newborn babies wake several times during the night, but by the age of 6 months they usually sleep through the night. At age 1, babies will sleep an average of 16 hours in every 24. Two to three hours of this sleep will be during the day.

Sleeplessness in infants may be due to:

- Digestive problems
- Hunger
- Teething
- Fever or other illness

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- A sleeping problem becomes persistent and unbearable, despite home treatment
- A sleeping problem occurs more than 3 nights per week for more than one month

